

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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USIA-15 AID-20 PC-04 DRC-01 /121 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5380

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 6677

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, BR

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT GEISEL ACTS PUBLICLY AGAINST POLICE VIOLENCE

SUMMARY: THE APPARENT ASSASSINATION OF TWO YOUTHS BY UNIFORMED POLICE IN NOVA IGUACU DURING MID-AUGUST BROUGHT STRONG PUBLIC REPROOF OF THE ACT BY PRESIDENT GEISEL COUPLED WITH A DEMAND FOR ENERGETIC ACTION ON THE PART OF STATE AUTHORITIES TO LOCATE THE CULPRITS. END SUMMARY.

1. ON THE MORNING OF AUGUST 16, TWO YOUTHS LIVING IN AN ABANDONED HOUSE NEAR NOVA IGUACU, RIO DE JANEIRO STATE, WERE MADE TO STAND FACING A WALL AND WERE KILLED BY SUBMACHINE GUN BULLETS FIRED INTO THEIR BACKS. ACCORDING TO WITNESSES, THE ASSAILANTS WERE UNIFORMED POLICEMEN. THE EVENT, INCLUDING TESTIMONY OF WITNESSES, WAS REPORTED IN THE PRESS. ACCORDING TO SOURCES, PRESIDENT GEISEL WAS DEEPLY DISTURBED BY THE ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT OF POLICE OFFICERS IN THE KILLINGS AND INSTRUCTED JUSTICE MINISTER FALCAO TO PRESS FOR IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION OF THE CASE.

2. ON AUGUST 21, MINISTER FALCAO SENT THE FOLLOWING TELEGRAM TO STATE GOVERNOR PADILHA: "APPALLED AND SHOCKED BY THE BARBARITY OF THE SCENES DESCRIBED IN  
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THE PRESS, PRESIDENT ERNESTO GEISEL HAS EXPRESSLY

REQUESTED ME TO SOLICIT YOUR SPECIAL COURTESY IN TAKING URGENT ACTION TO DETERMINE THE TRUTH OR LACK OF TRUTH IN THE PRESS COVERAGE OF THIS EPISODE, ADOPTING, IN THE AFFIRMATIVE CASE, ENERGETIC LEGAL MEASURES APPROPRIATE TO THE RIGOROUS PUNISHMENT OF THE THREE POLICEMEN INDICATED AS POSSIBLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PERVERSE ASSASSINATION OF THE TWO BOYS. I AWAIT THE KINDNESS OF A RESPONSE FROM YOUR EXCELLENCY, FOR THE PURPOSE OF BRINGING IT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PRESIDENT." THIS WIDELY-PUBLICIZED MESSAGE WAS FOLLOWED ON AUGUST 29 BY AN INTERVIEW OF MINISTER FALCAO BY REPORTERS OF THE ESTADO DE SAO PAULO DURING WHICH FALCAO STATED, "IT IS WIDELY AND PUBLICLY KNOWN THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DOES NOT APPROVE USELESS AND UNNECESSARY POLICE VIOLENCE. ENERGY IN ACTION, FIRMNESS IN REACTION, AND LEGITIMATE DEFENSE OF THE POLICEMEN IN CONFRONTATION WITH CRIMINALS HAS THE APPROVAL BOTH OF MORALITY AND THE LAW. IT IS ESSENTIAL, HOWEVER, THAT THE POLICEMAN ACT AND REACT WITH A SENSE OF MODERATION AND WITHOUT ABUSE OF AUTHORITY ..."

3. COMMEFT: THE PRESIDENTIAL ORDER, AND FALCAO'S SUBSEQUENT REMARKS, REPRESENT, WE BELIEVE, A SINCERE DESIRE ON THE PART OF THE GEISEL ADMINISTRATION TO REIN IN EXCESSIVE POLICE VIOLENCE AND TO GIVE PUBLIC WARNING TO ERRANT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY FORCES THAT SUCH ACTS WILL NOT PASS UNNOTICED AND UNPUNISHED. TOGETHER WITH THE ADMINISTRATION'S PLANS TO STRENGTHEN AND UPGRADE THE FEDERAL POLICE, THIS EXPRESSION OF PRESIDENTIAL CONCERN CAN BE SEEN AS AN EARNEST OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE TO BRING THE SECURITY FORCES GRADUALLY UNDER TIGHTER CENTRAL CONTROL.

4. FOR FALCAO'S COMMENTS TO DAO ABOUT HIS POLICIES AND THOSE OF MILITARY COMMANDERS WITH REGARD TO QUESTION OF TORTURE, SEE DAO MSG IR 6809056674 TO DIA (NOTAL) DATE 031410Z SEPT 74.  
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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Draft Date:** 04 SEP 1974  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** shawdg  
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**TAGS:** PINT, BR  
**To:** STATE  
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